

REMARKS

Appreciation is hereby expressed to Examiner Reese for the interview so courteously granted on August 30, 2005. The Examiner is thanked for the very thorough and professional final Office Action and the suggestions therein for obviating the prior art rejections. Pursuant to the interview and the Examiner's suggestions, Claims 4 and 9-13 have been cancelled and Claim 1 extensively rewritten to more definitely set forth the invention and obviate the prior art rejection. Support for the amendment of Claim 1 can be found in the Specification on page 5, lines 3-13, and 28-31; page 6, lines 1-4; page 9, lines 15-26; page 10, lines 17-31; page 11, lines 1-13 and 18-26 and page 13, lines 1-3. Support also can be found in Figs. 5, 7 and 9-12. The present amendment is deemed not to introduce new matter or raise any new issues requiring further search by the Examiner. Claims 1-3 and 5-8 remain in the application.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the objection to the Abstract. The Abstract has been rewritten in accordance with MPEP 608.01(b) and is attached hereto. The objection to the Abstract is therefore believed to be moot. Withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested of the rejection of Claims 1-13 under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Toran in view of Shirai.

The Examiner is thanked for his suggestion on page 10 of the Office Action to add structural limitations to account for the exact function that the structure provides. Accordingly, Claim 1 has been amended to define the recesses as "having a rectangular cross section and right and left lateral walls and top and bottom walls". Also, the protrusions have now been defined as "having an approximate rectangular cross section and faces corresponding in configuration to the walls of said recesses into which the protrusions engage".

When the connecting protrusions of the bars are inserted into corresponding recesses of an

adjacent bar, Claim 1 now provides that “motion of adjacent bars in a vertical direction are blocked since top and bottom walls of each of the recesses contact a top and bottom face of a corresponding protrusion inserted therein”. With the addition of the above structural limitations to Claim 1, it can be seen that the motion of the respectively adjacent bars in the vertical direction is blocked, since the top and bottom walls of each of the recesses contact the top and bottom faces of corresponding protrusions. On the other hand, movement in the axial direction is not blocked.

In addition, Claim 1 has been amended to require that “said first beveled portion being formed on a bottom face of each protrusion at its tip and said second beveled portion being formed on a top face of each protrusion at its back”. Further, Claim 1 has been amended to require that the first and second beveled portions form clearances between the protrusions and corresponding recesses to allow the connecting bars to be bent a preset distance in one direction only, whereby side by side bars can be adjusted in their intervals and can be rotated in one direction up to a predetermined angle.

It is respectfully submitted that the particular construction of the beveled portions now called for in Claim 1 is such that the first beveled portion is formed on the bottom face of each of the protrusions at its tip, while the second beveled portion is formed on the top face of each of the protrusions at its base.

Further, Claim 1 has been amended to require that the bars arranged side by side can be adjusted in gaps between adjacent bars and that the bars are connected with each other in such a manner that they can be curved as a whole up to a limited predetermined angle in one direction only.

It is believed that the structure now called for in Claim 1 is nowhere disclosed in either Toran or Shirai. It is also respectfully submitted that this combination of references in no way suggests or renders unpatentably obvious the subject matter now called for in Claim 1 herein. For these reasons,

it is respectfully submitted that the Examiner would be justified in no longer maintaining the rejection. Withdrawal of the rejection is accordingly respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the application is now in condition for allowance and early action and allowance thereof is accordingly respectfully requested. In the event that there is any reason why the application cannot be allowed at the present time, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner contact the undersigned at the number listed below to resolve any problems.

Respectfully submitted,

TOWNSEND & BANTA

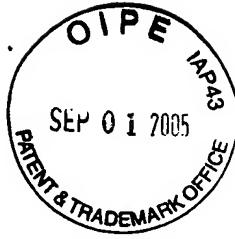


Donald E. Townsend
Reg. No. 22,069

Customer No. 27955

Date: August 30, 2005

TOWNSEND & BANTA
c/o PortfolioIP
P.O. Box 52050
Minneapolis, MN 55402
(202) 220-3124



MIT-024-USA-P

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING

I hereby certify that this Amendment and transmittal in Docket No. MIT-024-USA-P, Serial No. 10/765,958, filed January 24, 2004, is being deposited with the United States Postal Service with sufficient postage as first class mail in an envelope addressed to:

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

On August 30, 2005

Donald E. Townsend

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donald E. Townsend".